

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. .

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-4 (previously cancelled)

5. (five times amended) A process for detecting a toxin in a biological sample, said process comprising

(a) ~~contacting a biological sample containing a toxin and obtained from the group consisting of animal, plant and bacterial biological samples, under in vitro conditions, with antibodies to a~~

5 ~~Lethal Toxin Neutralizing Factor, said antibodies being made~~

against a synthetic peptide consisting of at least five amino acids of

SEQ ID NO: 1, or

against a natural 68 kDa Lethal Toxin Neutralizing Factor protein, wherein said protein is
isolated from opossum serum ~~and having a molecular weight of 68 kDa and containing~~

10 ~~SEQ ID NO: 1,~~

~~to produce an immune complex, and~~

(b) ~~after said contacting, detecting the immune complex formed between the toxin and the~~
~~antibody~~ antibodies by an ELISA, wherein said sample is obtained from the group consisting of
animal, plant and bacteria.

Claim 6 (previously cancelled)

7. (five times amended) A process as in claim 5 wherein the said antibodies ~~and the~~
~~biological sample are contacted in a procedure wherein the antibodies are in a fluid state and a~~
~~lethal~~ the toxin is attached to a plate, ~~to produce the immune complex, said process further~~
~~comprising~~

5 ~~conducting an ELISA on the immune complex, and~~

~~obtaining a numerical result which wherein said toxin detected by ELISA~~ is roughly proportional to the lethal dose of the toxin as determined by animal bioassay.

8. (Thrice Amended) A process as in claim 5 wherein the ~~toxin is contained in a fluid biological sample~~ is selected from the group consisting of food, blood sera ~~and other body fluid~~, saliva, urine and milk, and the ELISA is carried out by antigen capture format.

9. (seven times amended) A method for assaying a free toxin in a sample, wherein said ~~sample is a mixture of a partially neutralized toxin and a specific anti-serum made against the toxin~~; said method comprising

5 (a) ~~contacting a predetermined amount of the~~ ~~toxin plus a predetermined amount of the specific anti-serum to form the mixture containing a reduced amount of free toxin due to partial neutralization by the specific anti-serum;~~

~~contacting the mixture sample with an antibody~~ antibodies made

10 (1) ~~against a natural Lethal Toxin Neutralizing Factor protein isolated from~~
~~opossum serum and having a molecular weight of 68 kDa and containing SEQ ID~~
~~NO: 1, or~~

(2) ~~against a synthetic peptide consisting of at least five amino acids of~~
~~SEQ ID NO: 1, or against a natural 68 kDa Lethal Toxin Neutralizing Factor~~
~~protein, wherein said protein is isolated from opossum serum, and~~

to from

15 (b) ~~detecting an immune complex with~~ formed between the free toxin ~~remaining in the sample and~~
~~the antibodies, and assaying the immune complex by an ELISA,~~

wherein said sample is a mixture of a predetermined amount of the toxin and a predetermined amount of the specific anti-serum to said toxin, wherein said mixture contains a reduced amount of free toxin due to partial neutralization by specific anti-serum.

10. (Previously four times Amended) A method as in claim 9 wherein the specific anti-serum is made against a venom.

Claims 11-14 (previously canceled).

15. (Thrice Amended) A process as in claim 5, wherein ~~the antibody is made against a Lethal Toxin Neutralizing Factor and reacts~~ said antibodies react immunologically ~~in vitro~~ with a wide range of biological toxins.

16. (Previously Twice Amended) A process as in claim 5 wherein said ELISA is carried out according to an ELISA double-sandwich method protocol.

17. (previously cancelled)

18. Canceled.

19. (Previously canceled.)